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ARMS

SEPTEMBER 1975

Canada P[illegible]oil
Second Class Reg'[illegible]n No. 3521

SIXTY-FIVE CENTS

A FAREWELL TO ARMS?

The Ontario provincial elections are only days away. Parliament will reconvene in Ottawa soon. What does it all mean?

Federal legislation which has been drafted, concerning firearms, over the spring and summer will be ready for presentation and first readings. Warren Allmand has some interesting tricks up his sleeve according to normally reliable sources. First for the provincial details.

Three parties, three platforms, all of which will affect the firearms owner in one way or another. The following details the various platforms adopted by the provincial candidates for the up-coming election.

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ONTARIO

If elected, the New Democratic Party will institute government controlled firearms and ammunition outlets and will remove the sale from retail and mail outlets. The registration of semi-automatic arms will be required, regardless of size, calibre or use. Automatic arms will be prohibited. The registration of the gun owner and certificates of safe handling and competancy will be required to own, purchase or acquire firearms or ammunition. Of course, provisions will be made for those that live in isolated rural areas that do not have easy access to firearms outlets. The government sales will offer mail order for these persons. In this way, people that must use firearms in daily living for food etc. will not be inconvenienced.

PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY [ONTARIO]

The PC party will require the issuance of firearms competance permits as well as registration of the gun owner in Ontario. This, if the federal government does not have plans for gun control in the immediate future. Mr. Frank Drea, PC candidate in Toronto's Scarborough Centre wishes to see firearms removed from [illegible] displays, removal of [illegible] and ammunition from [illegible] order and no more [illegible] buying of guns or [illegible]nition. He adds that, [illegible]s, sportsmen and [illegible] shooters are allied with the government in this issue. He also wishes to ". . . roll back the cult of the gun . . ." meaning to remove firearms from the hands of irresponsible youths who own them for no particular purpose, and others. Mr. Drea also wishes to see the licensing of firearms dealers and the keeping of records on the sale of guns or ammunition, stiffer enforcement on existing legislation and the unrestricted sale of surplus arms by unlicensed dealers, halted. He said, in a telephone interview, that he was aware of the large segment of responsible firearms enthusiasts and did not wish to hamper their sport. Automatic weapons, said Mr. Drea, can remain in the hands of bona-fide collectors and the trade therein, remain restricted to these people. (See reproduction of campaign pamphlet in this issue.)

LIBERAL PARTY OF ONTARIO

A spokesman for the Liberal party hastened to point out that firearms are not an issue in this election. Not that something will not be done if the situation merits it, rather that 'Mr. Davis could, and should , have instituted some form of legislation prior to this election. The Liberals feel that, Ottawa will probably be unveiling some form of legislation soon so that it would be redundant on their part to eschew the firearms issue any further.

In other words, the liberal party will not make a policy statement on the firearms issue at the moment unless another candidate brings up the subject. They feel that, when firearms DO become the issue, they will consult with as many parties that will be concerned in order to obtain a reasonable and reasoned stand. This will mean dialogue with law enforcement, judiciary, the public, enthusiasts and so on.

There you have the three stands. The judgement of these will be evidenced by the outcome of the vote. For editorial comment, turn to the editorial section of this month's issue.

Federal Action

CRACKDOWN IMMINENT?

The word that comes from three unrelated, but normally reliable sources is that the federal government, the Office of the Solicitor General in particular, is planning on sweeping changes in firearms laws.

Among the changes indicated to this writer are: A ban on the transfer and sale of automatic arms, registration of semi-automatic arms regardless of calibre or size, registration of the gun owner and certificate of competance. The last two items will be required for the purchase of firearms or ammunition and will be required for presentation when, and where, the firearm is being used when asked by an officer.

Possible further action will be the ban on mail order guns and ammunition.

Manufacturers Deny Gun Lobby Support

In a recent interview, a spokesman for the Canadian Sporting Arms and Ammunition Association denied that any manufacturer in Canada supports the Canadian 'Gun Lobby' in any way; Financial or otherwise.

In recent months, anti-gun lobbyists have been on record several times in stating that the manufacturers have a vested interest in the support of the gun lobby. One Ottawa radio announcer has repeatedly made this accusation over the air. The accusations are 'unfounded' states the Canadian Association. The Association does, however, support a number of wilderness and naturalist conservation associations, unrelated to firearms in any way.

PARKER HALE Sniper Rifle

The Canadian Armed Forces bought more than 500 Parker-Hale TX1200 rifles recently, to fulfill the need for a special purpose rifle.

Many manufacturers submitted rifles for evaluation in early 1974 but the selection was weeded to four different models by this year. The Parker-Hale was found to be the most acceptable, and was adopted.

Several changes were ordered when the rifle was accepted for service. One of these changes was the modification of the telescopic sight mount to accept several different sights for a more 'multi-purpose' rifle. The six power telescopic sight, a light intensification sight and possibly infra-red are what will be used on issue rifles.

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- SHOTGUN REPORT
- CLASSIFIED ADS
- TEST REPORT: THE LEWIS GUN

Who's Afraid of the BIG BAD WOLF?

The anti-gun faction has always been quick to point out the myriad neuroses of gun owners. In fairness, we must mention the following: That Frank Drea informs his constituents, ". . . the gun lobby is watching . . .", and that Dr. Morton Shulman has a permit to carry a handgun at all times, apparently living in fear for his life. Perhaps anti-gun crusaders should get together for group counselling? Physician heal thyself!

Frank Drea

GUN CONTROL

Gun control is our major social problem. Two years ago, I stood alone in the fight to have Ontario become the first area on the continent with gun control. Now, Ontario is ready to bring in gun control.

No more mail order rifles and shotguns; no more massive displays of weapons in store windows); no more instant buying of guns and ammo. Hunters, sportsmen and target shooters are allied with the Government in this campaign.

However, I still need your support to roll back the cult of the gun. I ask for a massive mandate to bring in gun control — remember the gun lobbies are watching this riding.

Campaign Headquarters: 2604 Eglinton Ave. E., Scarborough, Ontario.

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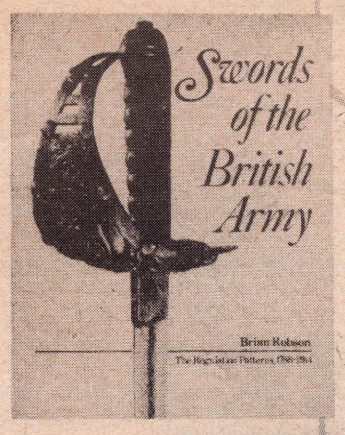

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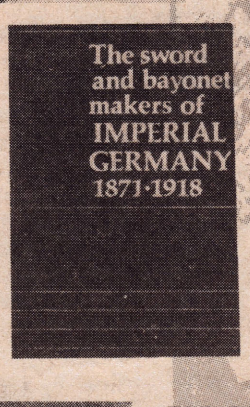

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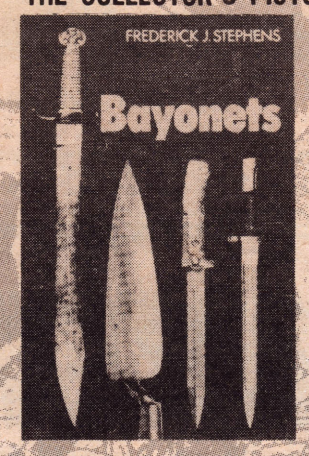

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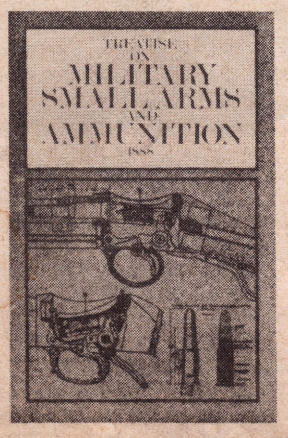

TREATISE ON MILITARY SMALL ARMS AND AMMUNITION, 1888

Compiled at the School Of Musketry, Hythe, with the assistance of the Royal Laboratory, Royal Small Arms Factory, Royal Gunpower Factory, in 1888. Reprinted London 1971. The weapons described and illustrated are mainly single shot rifles firing large black-powder cartridges, with sections on early machine guns and small arms ammunition.

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DCRA 1975

August Black Powder Match

The Black Powder National Match Program of the 93rd Dominion of Canada Rifle Association annual prize meeting was fired on August 10th at the Connaught Ranges near Ottawa.

Several dozen entries were received, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, as well as from a number of U.S. shooters. The colourful and historically authentic D.C.R.A. Black Powder Program attracted wide media coverage, including repeated full-page coverage in several newspapers both before and after the matches, plus extensive national TV coverage featuring live interviews with competitors on the actual firing line.

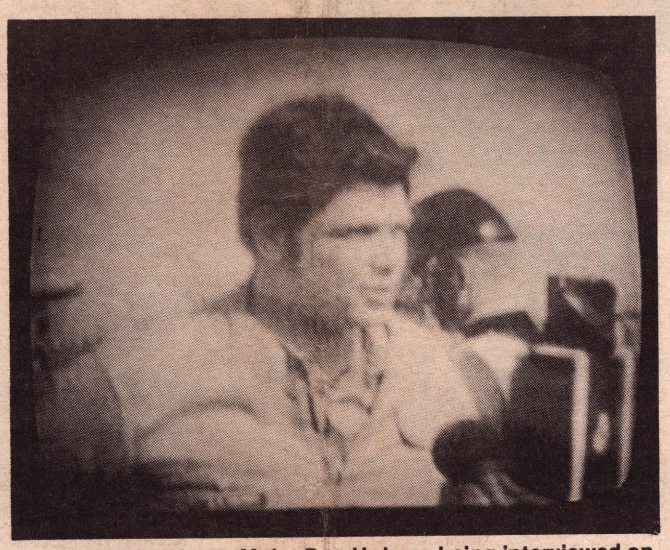
All five events were hotly contested by extremely evenly matched marksmen. In four of the five events, the difference between the first and the third place winners was two points or less, and in the fifth event, the difference between the first and the third place score was only four points. The highest scorer of the day was the National Defence Headquarters Rifle Association's Major Don Holmes, who won two gold medals, one silver, and the much-coveted Loyalist Cup, awarded for long range (1/8 mile) black powder competition. The bullseye in the long range match, incidentally, was a scant 4-½" in diameter. Major Holmes fired an iron-sighted Ruger #3 Single Shot carbine in .45/70 calibre, prone, to win the match.

The following are some of the more interesting facts to emerge from the 1975 Black Powder Matches:

• In the Snider Match, every one of the competitors who scored at, or above the match average used "duplex" loads, and all three place winners used the "oversize" .590" diameter Lyman Minie bullet #585213 HB.

• The Black Powder Open, in which any breech or muzzle loading black powder rifle may be used, was the most popular and heavily competed-in match. The average match score was dramatically higher than in any of the other matches. Because the conditions and distance (100 yards) of this match are similar to those for the Snider and the Muzzle Loader Matches, the improvement in scores is almost certainly attributable to the relatively greater and more consistent accuracy of the free-choice black powder rifles used, and to the care which went into the development of optimum loads for them. The most frequently used calibre was .45/70, and a very large number of shooters reported using "duplex" loads.

• In the Long Range Black Powder Match, a number of competitors showed they had not established a good 200 yard zero, prior to commencement of the match.



Snider Match winner Major Don Holmes being interviewed on the firing line.

• The typically low velocity, high trajectory, long time-of-flight black powder rifles once again demonstrated their vulnerability to gusty crosswind conditions which prevailed at the time of the match. Prospective future competitors would therefore be well advised to devote adequate time and practice to long range, windy condition shooting **with the rifle and load they plan to use** if they hope to compete effectively in this, and similar, long range black powder matches.

• The four highest scores in the Long Range Black Powder Match (24/35 avg.) were obtained with comparatively long, heavy, high sectional density .45 calibre breechloading bullets. The four lowest scores (9/35 avg.) were shot with muzzle loaders, and no muzzle loader obtained more than 12/35 in this match. So far no muzzle loading shooter had the temerity to fire round ball at ranges in excess of 100 yards, and in the long range match, the highest scoring muzzle loader came in a full four points behind the lowest scoring breech loader fired in the same event.

• Shooters and clubs interested in the 1976 (American Bicentennial) D.C.R.A. Black Powder National Match program are invited to write to the Secretary, D.C.R.A., CFB Ottawa North, OTTAWA, Ontario, K1A OK4, Attention: Black Powder Chairman.

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POINT OO BLANK

By G. N. DENTAY

Is this the end? It could well be after the completion of the provincial election in Ontario and the re-convening of Parliament in the Fall. Gun owners in Canada have chosen, for the most part, to do nothing. Upcoming legislation will be passed within the next few weeks. Oh, some of the fraternity HAVE done something . . . don't get me wrong. There are quite a few concerned individuals who have written, and more, to see that the lot of the sport shooting enthusiast gets a better shake. The vast majority have done nothing. Why?

Polarization within the ranks of the sport shooting enthusiasts has become more pronounced than ever. This, over the last few, turbulent months. The antique collectors don't care because their hobby will remain unaffected by legislation restricting automatic and semi-automatic arms. These restrictions come now . . . what later? The handgun shooters shrug off the possibility of legislation, fatalistically. Some have done their part; Most have done nothing. The other shooters and collectors sit around glumly, biting their thumbs and wringing their hands wondering, 'what will we do now?'. Again, some of them HAVE done something. But the majority have sloughed the responsibility onto the shoulders of others. Medically, we have a name for this disorder. It is called the 'Great Canadian Inertia' and is also visible in other areas. What about the 'enormous' gun lobby that we have in Canada? You know, the one that is supported by the manufacturers? Bah! The enormous 'gun lobby' is run by a few concerned individuals who are worried enough to do something. Their wages and quarters do not bely that ever increasing flow of money that pours into their bank accounts (which is hogwash). Why not try and support one of them if you can't do something yourself. It is only for yourself that you are working. Remember; if a few people can be considered, 'enormous' then, Bravo!

What about the others? I know a few of them personally. We will make an addition to our Great Canadian Inertia and call it the 'Great Canadian Inertia with severe complications of Ostrich', syndrome. Shades of Marcus Welby! It won't cure itself.

The way that I see it, firearms are no longer the issue. Instead of being unravelled into component pieces, the firearms 'issue' is clouded by Capital Punishment, Crime, Bail Reform and more . . . all in a handy, easily digested little package. This is the way that the moronic masses understand it best. Does that include you? Prove it!

The Ontario Voter and the Canadian citizen have one last chance. Not two; Just one. In Ontario, it is to vote for the party of your choice. Now you can show them when they are bent over, showing their most vulnerable position, so that the rest of Canada can see. Kick them hard where it counts the most . . . in The Vote. The rest of Canada still has the opportunity to rain letters of protest upon the responsible parties in our government. It has to be done intelligently and in an ordered, quiet way. It only needs five minutes of time and a stamp. I've found the time. Can you?

*****

I get many letters each week keeping me informed of the various platforms in the Ontario election and of other incidents across the country. Lowell Green, an Ottawa area radio announcer who is a recent immigrant to Canada, recently informed his listeners that it was possible to buy automatic arms anywhere in Canada, through the mail. This, with the full knowledge of the police, no questions asked. He also added, by allusion, that it is permissible to hunt deer with a Sten Submachine gun. *See L.G. Transcript. Firearms are not the issue here. The CRTC steps in quickly when an advertiser makes false claims over the airwaves so I wrote a letter to them and enclosed a transcript of the editorial.

This is not the first time that Mr. Green has come up with this sort of fabrication. It is the first time that I have had a copy of anything that he said over the air. I did not discuss the subject material (Guns) but rather, complained of false and misleading broadcasting. I assume that appropriate action will be taken by the CRTC.

*****

In Ontario, the voter has basically two choices regarding firearms platforms. One is to vote for the party that advocates immediate, irresponsible, legislation now; The other is to vote for the party that promises responsible legislation if re-elected. The obvious, but unspoken, campaign promise is responsible legislation now, whatever comes later is anyone's guess. Liberal or N.D.P., and now, or Conservative and later. Your choice.

*****

One conservative candidate running is Frank Drea from Scarborough Centre in Toronto. His feelings about firearms are printed on page 1.

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MORTON SHULMAN RISKS OUR LIVES

Dr. Morton Shulman, former NDP MPP for Toronto's High Park riding risked our lives in his quest for attention.

Shulman exposed the fact that a survival flare pen could be converted into an improvised pistol of .22 caliber. Immediately following this publicity stunt, reports one of Toronto's largest sporting goods, "there was a great influx of people asking for them." Salesmen at two other outlets reported a similar boom in demand for the AP-15 .22 rifle, the type used by Shulman in his recent antics at the Ontario legislature.

The Toronto Star's Bureau of Accuracy says the Star tends to play down stories that may encourage people to commit criminal or irresponsible acts. For example, "Subway suicides come in spates," they told us," if there is mention of one . . . there's more soon after."

Nice to know you care so much about the people Doctor.

CTV Gun Poll

VALID?

BACKGROUND:

C.T.V. commissioned The Canadian Gallup Poll to complete a telephone study, among male and female heads of households, in five cities across Canada — Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver.

Approximately one hundred interviews were conducted in each centre, between April 19 and 22, 1975. Respondents were selected randomly from the telephone directories of these centres.

Because of the disproportionate sampling, total results have been weighted to the population contained in each of these centres. A copy of the standard questionnaire used is appended to this report.

Ques. 1: "Those that argue against gun controls say that Canadians should have the right to bear arms. Do you agree or disagree that Canadians should have the **right to bear arms?"**

Ques. 2: "Some people feel gun controls discriminate against the law-abiding and do nothing to discourage the criminal. Do you agree or disagree?"

Ques. 3: "Would you favour or oppose registration of all rifles and shotguns even if it required a major expenditure for administration?"

EDITOR'S NOTE:

A first year university student would have had this survey thrown out if presented to a professor. Note the word 'Approximately' then note the text of Question One. Is this applicable to Canada?

Anti-Gun Radio Host LOWELL GREEN

Yesterday Morton Shulman walked into a Toronto sporting goods store and bought himself a rifle, selected it he said, from an assortment of military rifles available, including British Lee Enfields, German Mausers, the Japanese Ariska and the U.S. M1. There was also, he said, a good assortment of Mannlicher Carcano, "hard hitting", Italian rifles; The kind used to hit President Kennedy.

He could also have purchased in the same store the M16 described by the store as, 'Colts answer to the demand for a semiautomatic **version of the AR15 automatic rifle purchased by the United States armed forces.' That particular model, by the way, fires a magazine of thirty large copper jacketed bullets which could probably stop an elephant.**

Shulman bought his rifle, no questions asked, no name required, no registering of the guns number he could have bought a dozen or two along with sufficient ammunition, to kill every member of the Ontario government without a single question asked. He could have been an escaped criminal, he could have been a madman, he could have been under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

No matter the gun laws which both Ontario Attorney General John Clement and Federal Justice Minister Otto Lang think are perfectly fine, don't concern themselves with who buys rifles and shotguns. Interestingly enough, on the same day that Morton Shulman carried a rifle into the Ontario Legislature, I acquired a nice little newspaper called, 'the Gunrunner'. It's published in Lethbridge Alberta and describes itself, "the Canadian gun monthly listing everything from antiques to artillery," and it does.

Just listen to this . . . just listen to what you or I or anyone (your neighbour) can obtain in Canada, no questions asked, through the mail; This from a Haines Gun House in Bridgewater Nova Scotia." Special from Israel; Sten Gun Mark 1, 2, 3, or 4 a Bren Gun Mark 1, .303, a two inch British Mortar and eight millimeter Vickers without tripod. From Glen R. Wilson in Dartmouth: 'U.S. M1 carbine described as the original American army 30 calibre complete with sling and 15 shot magazine". International Firearms in Montreal also features the 30 calibre rifle along with bayonets to fit them along with 30 shot magazine. Colts in Canada features an entire page of handguns including the Detective Special, the Cobra 38 special, the Lawman Mark 3, Trooper Mark 3, New Frontier 22 calibre, the Python .357 Magnum, the Government Mark 4, and the AR15 carbine which is about as close to a machine gun as our laws will allow. Yes, we do have some laws.

All of these guns, with the exception of the handguns, can be obtained by anyone through the mails without the necessity of any identification or registration. We don't want to inconvenience our sportsmen you understand. **Oh, by the way, all you sportsmen there, a new shipment of Peruvian M1909 Mausers complete with bayonets now available from International Firearms. Oh yes, all you deer hunters, Gerald Macdonald in New Glasgow has a great bargain on a fully automatic Mark 2 Sten gun and don't forget those British mortars available from your friendly mailman no questions asked.**

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Ship's Anchor, Brass Plate	2x2	$1.00
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MILITARY REPORT

In a move to placate the governments of black African emerging nations, the French government in August suspended sales of land armaments to South Africa. The contract for ships being filled by France will go on. In fact, so will most other deals, since South Africa now manufactures, under license, the Mirage jets and other military goods designed in France. Just what will be affected? Well, we're still looking.

Canadians looking to escape the winter can be assured of a hot time in Rhodesia or South Africa. Both countries are seeking North Americans for their armies and police, in this case the British South African Police, a para-military police force. Preference is given to Vietnam veterans, but at least one man with no military experience has been hired.

The Volunteers and Veterans for Vietnam (VVV) which, in the closing days of the Vietnam conflict, recruited 2500 volunteers for Vietnam, has closed its doors in Washington. Over 200 Canadians offered their services. The plans to arm and airlift the force to South Vietnam failed and a later plan to infiltrate via Thailand and Laos was greeted less than enthusiastically by those countries' governments. Organizers hoped the force could be used for anti-communist guerilla work elsewhere in the world. There were no takers. Perhaps memories of roving bands of mercenaries in the Katanga more than a decade ago make governments leary of hiring ready-made foreign armies. Would-be mercenaries desiring long-range stable working conditions had best apply to the Pope in the Vatican: And it would help if you are Swiss and can use a pike. On the subject of roving mercenaries in the Katanga, readers may be interested to know that their old leader "Mad" Mike Hoare is alive and well and a businessman in Durban. He appeared at a Mercenary reunion(?) some time ago, and was recently at the centre of an aborted plan to invade Angola.

Another old soldier, Otto Skorzeny, died this summer. Skorzeny, who Hitler called "the toughest man alive" was responsible for the daring mountain rescue of Mussolini and many other commando type German WW 11 operations. He survived the war and later maintained residences in Ireland and Spain. In Spain he ran a Ranger-type private training school. One of his contributions to the science of demolitions is the dust charge outlined on page 158 of the American Special Forces Operational Techniques Manual.

The Hughes organization is busy doing things other than raising bits and pieces of Russian subs. Hughes Aircraft Co. and Sperry Rand are competing for U.S. government contracts on a new enemy artillery locater. The Hughes device is a portable radar unit using a fast-scanning thin beam. The radar will detect any projectile rising from the earth's surface, including rockets and mortar bombs, track it, plot its trajectory, and backplot it to the point of origin; all before the projectile arrives at its target. It is truck portable and can handle large numbers of projectiles at once. By integrating the detector into a fire-control system with friendly artillery, fire can be returned almost instantly with pinpoint accuracy onto enemy batteries.

Closer to home, Westinghouse Canada Ltd. of Hamilton, has developed a sonar system for use on surface craft as small as 200 tons. It features one-man operation, a single cabinet, towed variable depth sonar (VDS) unit, and can pick out, track, and direct fire onto a small sub at a range of 16-kilometers. They also make damn fine refrigerators.

The CIA, like most agencies of its type, often finds need for "sterile" weapons, that is, guns completely unmarked and untraceable to their point of origin. Two examples are the Madsen Model 50's which were specially made for the CIA totally devoid of all markings during the 1950s. The guns apparently were never used and after serial numbers were added were sold by Interarmco in the late 1960s. Later, M-16 rifles were acquired and all marking machined off before use. Many of these were recently scrapped. Now, the CIA seems to be seeking a new source. A well-known American gun dealer was recently asked to establish an out-of-country factory to make a very, handy submachinegun. The gentleman turned the offer down for monetary reasons, but negotiations continue.

NATO will soon acquire communications equipment from the West German owned Israel-based Tadiran Co.

Artillery and rocket fire can only be as accurate as the target indications given by forward observers. To give forward observers the ability to indicate targets precisely a variety of laser, and radar rangefinders, coupled with position locaters, are being used or tested around the world. Britain has recently ordered 150 radar-type units for its army. Despite the pinpoint accuracy and light-weight of the laser units, the laser has disadvantages over the older radar types. The laser can only operate under conditions of good visibility and can still cause damage to the human eye. A third system, of TV-type cameras incorporating high-magnification and filtering is being made in Sweden for use against land sea and air targets.

The U.S. is developing a new version of the highly effective "Redeye" surface to air missile (SAM). The Redeye is a handheld launcher firing a rocket that homes on an aircraft exhaust. This limits it to chasing the aircraft, so the operator can only fire after the aircraft has passed overhead. The new "Stinger" features a built-in "lead-bias" which directs the rocket ahead of the heat source, allowing it to home on the aircraft from any relative position. Development and procurement will cost $660 million.

Several old and famous arms-makers have come to our attention lately . . . Krupp is still very much in the business, but now makes items such as helmets, etc., rather than weapons themselves. Breda, infamous for its less-than-reliable WW 11 recoil-operated LMGs, is making and marketing a variety of single and multiple rocket anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, 40-mm automatic gun feeding devices and mounts, and, a twin 40-mm naval turret. Vickers Armament Division is marketing a fully-automatic 4.5-inch naval cannon and its diesel powered, 33-mph, main battle tank with its 105-mm high-velocity gun. The tank is proving a good seller in African countries. Cadillac-Gage, makers of the orphan Stoner-system of 5.56-mm guns, is offering its Commando four-wheeled armoured car, stressing its versatility in military or police work. Colt continues to offer its M16A1 rifle, citing that with over 3.5 million guns in the field the rifle is the most tested and battle-proven 5.56-mm available today.

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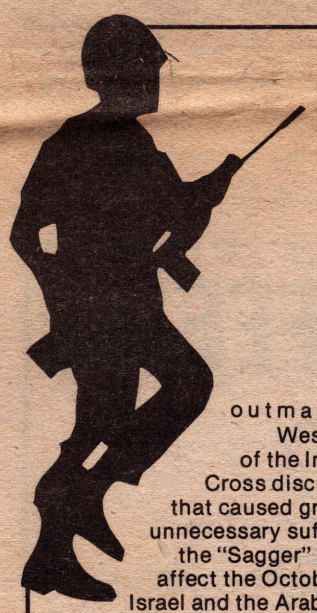
It's possible to go to the local Five and Ten and pick up a gun rack or cabinet without spending too much money. These racks and cabinets tend to get secreted away into dusty corners or unused rooms to hide their ugliness, albeit, their utilitarianism. Pride of ownership doesn't come cheaply.

In Napanee Ontario, there is a quiet veterinarian's office stuck just outside of town. When not tending to the needs of man's best

Continued on Page 5



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BODY ARMOUR THEN AND NOW

Before we wade through the bloody, sodden fields of World War One, let's jump back a few years to the American Civil War.

If you were an officer in the Union Army, you could buy yourself a "Soldier's Bullet Proof Vest" for the paltry sum of seven dollars. The price was lower, as was the quality, for the same vest but in the infantryman's configuration. In this case, five dollars would have netted a vest for the man who wanted to live longer than his mates. The only problem was peer pressure. Many foot-sloggers were laughed out of wearing their newly acquired vests, much to their mortification when the Minie balls began to fly. Recent tests conducted at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York showed that these vests would actually defeat a .45ACP bullet fired from a range of ten feet! The Soldier's Bullet proof vest was manufactured by the G. & D. Cook & Company of New Haven, Conneticut and employed a number of pieces of steel plate inserted into pockets in a regular black military vest. The second most popular type of bullet proof vest of this period was manufactured by the Atwater Armour Company, also of New Haven. This particular brand (Brand Y?) was constructed of heavier plates which were worn somewhat like the WW1 German Machine Gunners Armour, that is, sheets of steel held in position on the body by broad metal hooks over the shoulders. A minor difference was that there was a belt for attachment about the waist which the German Armour does not have. The Atwater Armour was heavier than the Cook Armour and cost about twice as much. Back to the fields of Flanders.

World War One saw a limited usage of body armour and usually only on an experimental basis. Body armour was never really accepted during this period due to its excessive weight and lack of mobility. A British medical survey conducted by some officers during the War came to the conclusion that, had body armour been general issue and use, approximately three quarters of the men injured or killed could have been saved through the use of protective armour. This, in light of the fact that 60 to 80% of casualties were due to low and medium velocity shrapnel fragments. (See Projectile Injuries Vol. 1 No. 2 and 3) and secondary missiles, shows that the realization of the value of body armour began to return at this time.

British interest in metallic and non-metallic body armour grew. Experiments were conducted and produced several interesting new types. One was a silk lined necklet which was able to defeat a 230 grain pistol bullet travelling at 600 feet per second. Oomph! The major problem encountered with this type was that it was expensive ($25) and deteriorated quickly under combat conditions. Not something that one could rely on for long.

Another development during this period was a six pound 'Body Shield' composed of layers of linen, cotton, silk and resin to form a sandwich. Looking at today's soft and hard armour, we can see that they were on the right track to fibreglass laminates. At this point, in 1917, General Pershing said, "Effort should be continued towards the satisfactory development of personal body armour". As per usual, the interim period between World Wars One and Two saw a very low level of experimentation and development.

The British Army continued experimenting in the field of body armour and, in 1941, arrived at a formulation which was prepared and submitted for field test to the Americans. This armour, weighing two pounds, twelve ounces consisted of three plates of manganese steel, one millimetre thick, two worn over the front of the abdomen and one worn to protect the upper back. Two other models of British body armour aroused interest, these being the Armourette and the Wisbrod Armoured Vest. The Armourette consisted of steel plates embedded in a vulcanized rubber-duck carrier which granted a high degree of flexibility. The Wisbrod Armoured Vest was much the same, only it utilized canvas covered steel plates which overlapped, much as a lobster tail, to provide protection to the front of the thorax and abdomen. The problem that was never solved was the addition of yet more weight to the soldier's already heavy carrying load and the retention of body heat which resulted in early fatigue and sometimes, heat prostration. Combat efficiency was also severely hampered. At this time, the army began to look elsewhere while the air forces picked up the idea because of an airman's usually stationary position during combat. This eliminated the carrying weight problem and mostly eliminated heat retention. More about this later, since modern developments in body armour have still not eliminated either of these problems.

American interest in body armour flowered again around June of 1944 when it was found that Japanese personnel on Bougainville in the South Pacific were using a form of body armour, though in very limited service. A sample was obtained and recommendations were made. American design ingenuity was soon put to work.

The first efforts were not very successful. An experimental model was built using over half inch thick carbon steel. Have you ever carried a safe around, draped over your shoulders like a jacket? Shortages in metal for development shunted the investigations to non-ferrous materials. These were lighter in weight and could be made slimmer than metallic models. One of the last efforts made into metallic body armour was to use squares of aluminum in a nylon backing. One of the first of the non-metallic materials to be tried was 'Doron', a fibreglass weave impregnated with plastic. It was a Colonel F. Doriot who decided to honour this development with part of his name. A large number of American super-corporations worked on the development and betterment of Doron. Some names are Westinghouse Electric Corp., Hercules Powder Company, T.E., Firestone Tire and Rubber and many, many more.

A later type of Doron, 1/16th inch thick had the capacity to defeat a .45 ACP bullet when fired from the service pistol at 800 F.P.S. to allow for a safety margin, the design was thickened to 1/8th inch of 15 ply Doron. We encounter one of the recurring problems again here. Doron is not flexible although it can be moulded into body contours during production. It also weighs more, although not as much as ferrous and metallic armour. At this point, it was found that 12 layers of a 2X2 weave nylon cloth could defeat a 17 grain simulated fragment travelling at 1275 f.p.s. This is about the average size of shell fragments and some secondary missiles (Kicked up gravel, sand etc.). Nylon was also very flexible. Eventually, a slipover vest was made incorporating Doron plate in a 2x2 basket weave nylon carrier. The vest weighed 6.1 pounds. The beauty of this particular vest was that the amount of protection could be varied to meet the threat. The Doron plates could be pulled out of, or added to, the ballistic nylon carrier. The carrier itself could be worn alone and was sufficient to defeat some fragments moving at velocities of up to 1275 f.p.s.

Early in the Vietnam conflict, several new developments took place which meant a major breakthrough in the design of body armour. Investigations into ceramic materials proved that they could utilize a compound known as aluminum oxide which, when backed by a fibreglass compound, could defeat missiles of up to .30 calibre . . . Armour Piercing at the muzzle! In some instances, this combination can also defeat a .50 cal. bullet at a distance. Further development in the field of ceramic armour produced two more composites. Boron carbide and silicon carbide, although lighter than aluminum oxide, were more expensive to produce. $800.00 was not an unusual price to pay for a set of body armour produced from this ceramic compound although, the amount of protection required, usually had some influence on the price.

The V50 of body armour is the criteria which is used to evaluate its effectiveness. The V50 of armour is the velocity of a missile which, when striking armour at a zero degree angle of obliquity, will penetrate completely 50 times out of 100. The other 50 times, the missile will be defeated. The V50 is not a particularly accurate method of determining the effectiveness of armour since the number of times a missile will strike at a perfect right angle to the armour are few indeed. Also, the fragment used in past testing was a 'fragment simulator' in which a 17 grain projectile of approximately .22 calibre was propelled to varying speeds to attempt standardization in some of the test procedures.

After the development of ballistic nylon, the search for similar compounds resulted in the development of high tenacity nylons and PRD-49 and -29, or Kevlar compounds. This particular compound is the one most widely used in the manufacture of 'soft' body armour today. Depending on the number of layers used in the suit, the V50 varies, as does the 'blunt trauma'. Current body armour manufacturers are producing clothing which can defeat handgun calibres up to (and including) .44 Magnum. This means that the same armour will likely defeat most forms of primary and secondary missiles originating from an explosive, or similar, device. (When striking the armour from a distance.)

We mentioned blunt trauma a few sentences back. One of the few drawbacks to soft armour is that in some instances, it can be penetrated by an icepick. Most will stop the full thrust of an American bayonet but the lowly icepick rates as a weapon to contend with. When a missile strikes, and is defeated by body armour, the velocity at impact is translated into a 'shock wave' which is transmitted through the armour in varying degrees. The shock wave travels through the medium which is found immediately behind the armour . . . namely the wearer. Depending on such factors as missile impact velocity, angle of incidence and area of impact, a number of effects can be noted by the wearer. The worst that can happen is death caused by damage to vital organs. This happens very rarely but more often, the skin underlying the garment can be bruised, and in some instances, bones may be fractured e.g. the sternum. Any of these consequences are certainly preferable to what would occur if armour had not been worn. When mobility and weight are of little concern, a static police situation for example, the heavier but more effective ceramic armour is indicated. A drawback of this type is the possible deflection of missile breakup fragments into unprotected areas. Armour piercing bullet cores would most likely be the most dangerous situation encountered but the chance of encountering this type of projectile would be slight. Outer coverings of Kevlar or ballistic nylon usually entrap secondary fragments. Here is one advantage of soft armour: It normally stops a missile by absorbing it's energy, hence velocity.

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GUN CABINET

Continued from Page 4

friends, Dr. H. M. 'Mac' Smith builds the most beautiful gun cabinets that we have seen for many years. His hand crafted cabinets become showpieces in living-rooms, much as a china cabinet stores and protects valued, antique china. Dr. Smith seems to be equally at home with a scalpel as he is with a chisel.

Hand selecting the finest 1 1/8" knotty pine, he reduces unfinished boards into a combination upper and lower gun cabinet that defies duplication. Every part is hand cut, inletted and finished in a long, painstaking process. Even the angle at which the guns rest is calculated to display the finest features of the gunmakers art. "That's where my Physics course comes in handy", he told us, smilingly, as he ran his hand over the wood. Indeed, a lot of work goes into the manufacture of each of his cabinets. Why? Because he enjoys it. "Oh, I suppose I could mass produce them and sell to retail outlets, but I don't want to. It's more or less a hobby." This is why Dr. Smith prefers to deal on a one-to-one relationship with his customers.

At around $800 for a combination upper and lower cabinet, good work doesn't come cheaply. But, where else do you get something that lasts for a lifetime without having to pay a fair price for it? It is nice to see that good Canadian craftsmen can still be found . . . although rarely.

See Picture Page 7

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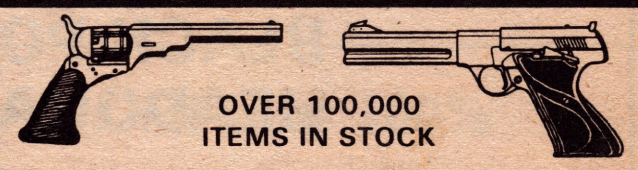

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CANADIAN BULLET A WINNER

The Shamrock Gun Centre, a small Canadian manufacturer, is producing a 51 grain, .224" match/varmint bullet that has every indication of being a winner.

In a recent bench rest rifle match, well known Ray Thomas, a custom gunsmith and ardent target shooter, won the 100 yard heavy Varmint category at Kitchener-Waterloo in June of this year using the Shamrock Centre bullet. He also won the 100 and 200 yard aggregate Heavy Varmint class on the Civic Holiday weekend in London, this summer. Ray Thomas is not the only shooter to have had excellent results using this new bullet. Mr. Al Pelletier, of the Northern Lights Gun Club in Stittsville, Ont. met with success using the Shamrock bullet. He won the Winter Championships conducted at the Stittsville Ranges as well as the Heavy Varmint class at the Canadian Nationals on June 21st. He was using a Remington action with a heavy Hart barrel in .222 Rem. calibre built by Ray Thomas. Results, when using the Shamrock bullet, can vary from rifle to rifle but the bullet will probably improve scoring with many good quality target and varmint rifles. A record .195" group was recorded using the Shamrock bullet.

Shamrock says that, in some warranted instances, custom ordering of bullets can be made through them. The difference in pressure rings during manufacture is allowed for when producing for guns with barrels that have had 3,000 to 5,000 rounds fired through them. Normally, the maximum variance that will be found in the Shamrock bullet is 3/10,000 of an inch. The minimum order for custom sized bullets is 1,000.

A flat base bullet, such as Shamrock's, has been the bone of contention with many target shooters for a long time. Some believe that, in order to be accurate, a match bullet should be boat tailed to reduce the coefficient of drag. Others say that, up to 300 yards, the base makes no difference. Past this point, the boat tail bullet definitely comes into its own. The success of the Shamrock bullet might bear this argument out, for this calibre at any rate. Most bench rest and target matches are held at, or below, the 300 yard range.

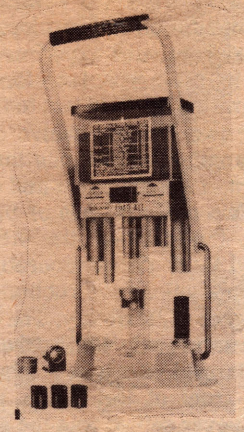
Why do they win? Gary Field, an owner of Shamrock, claims it is because of stricter quality control afforded by a smaller operation. The quality of materials used in the manufacture of Shamrock's match bullet is carefully controlled, as are the manufacturing tolerances. Quality control is also stricter since bullets are examined more frequently during manufacture to ensure concentricity and perfection. If a bullet is dropped during manufacture, for example, it is culled from the lot. He added that, "I don't think we'll take a back seat to anyone."

Future Plans include the manufacture and marketing of a 6mm (.647") Hollow point, boat tail match bullet. He said that research into materials and equipment is being made now.

NEW PRODUCTS

LEE LOAD-ALL SHOT SHELL RELOADER

Lee Precision Inc. of Hartford Wisconsin is offering a five station reloading press for the shotshell reloader. Priced right, at $44.95, it can reload up to 200 rounds per hour and comes with everything needed to set up your bench. Included are three extra charge bar bushings for 15 loadings using 10 different powders, full length nylon sizer, spare wad guide, and more.



The Load-All will handle 2 ¾ inch and three inch 12 gauge shells. It features enough powder capacity to load over 125 rounds and holds five pounds of shot. A feature that will be appreciated by the novice is the positive stop at the end of each loading step which eliminates the problem of wad pressure. It is permanently adjusted from the factory and does not change. The Load-All comes completely set up and rsquires no further adjustments. Complete instructions are provided with the press.

The Load All is available only in 12 Gauge but will be featured in other popular gauges soon.

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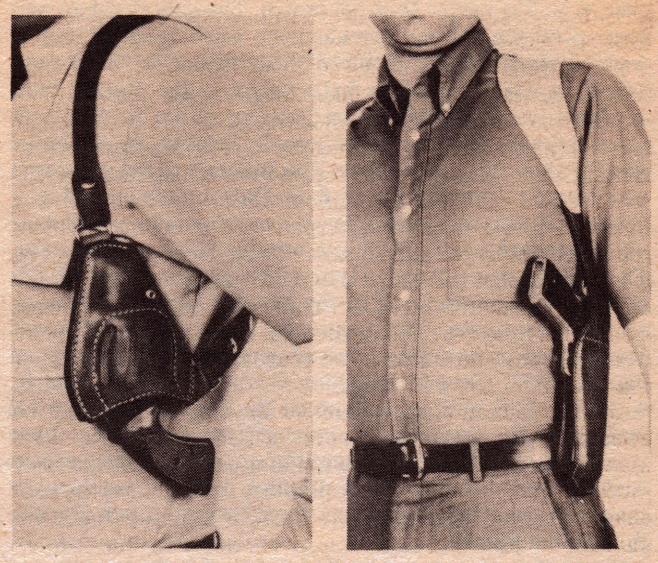
Available from: Giovanni's Gun Shop, 682 Wilson Ave. Downsview, Ont.



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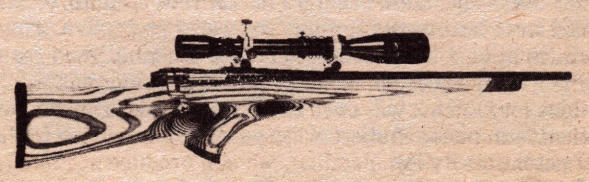

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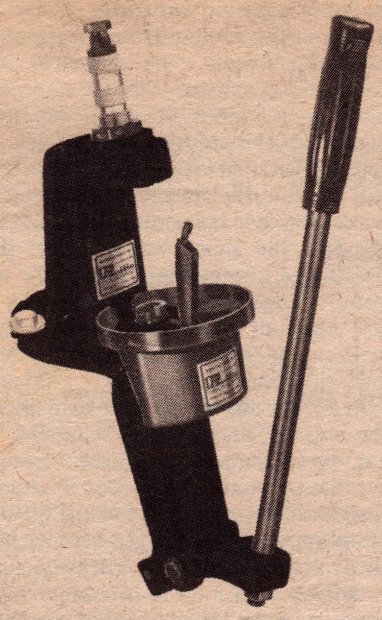

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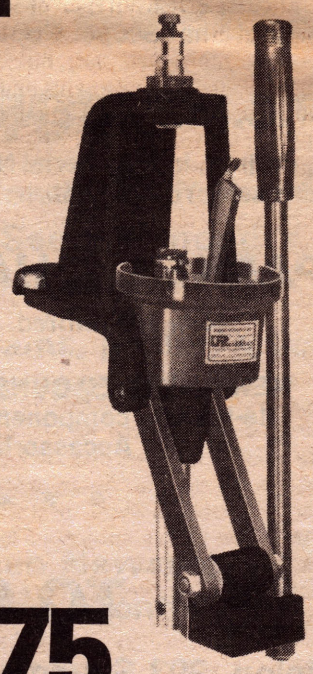

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THE LOADING BENCH

In this series we will review loading techniques from choosing loading equipment to advanced loading techniques. We will attempt to answer your questions about handloading individually if such requests are accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. The more common or interesting questions and answers will be printed here for the benefit of our readers.

The question most often asked about handloading is "What are the advantages of handloading?" There are as many different advantages to handloading as there are rifles to load for and calibers to load. Economy is usually the first reason given. The truth of the matter is that the savings realized will not likely be cash, but the ability to shoot more for the money available. A 20 round box of .30-06 cartridges retails currently for about $9.30. The same 20 rounds can be loaded for about one third of that amount. This is assuming the use of jacketed bullets in the handloads. By using cast lead bullets the cost of shooting can be reduced to the point where you may be able to shoot your large bore rifle cheaper than a .22 rim-fire.

Another advantage to handloading is also based on economy, not for the reloader but for the ammunition manufacturer. There are a large number of older, but very much servicable, firearms available to the shooter which are chambered for obsolete calibers. The ammunition companies continue to produce ammunition for as many years after the gun manufacturers cease production of arms in a caliber as is economically feasible, and in many cases, at a loss for several more years. Eventually these obsolete calibers will be dropped and the shooter must produce his own ammunition or retire an otherwise serviceable rifle. Most loading components are still available for cartridges which were discontinued before the turn of the century.

The ammunition loaded by the manufacturers is a compromise at best. It is loaded to give reasonably good results in the average rifle while not straining the older and weaker actions for which it was once chambered. This is particularly noticable in pistol calibers which are seldom loaded to their full potential. By handloading, we can produce ammunition which is capable of exploiting the full accuracy potential of the firearm and may at the same time gain considerable performance by loading to the highest safe level of performance for modern arms. An example of this is the .44-40 cartridge which was introduced in the 1870s. It is currently loaded to a pathetic level of performance to insure that, if used in older and weaker firearms, no harm is likely to come to either gun or shooter. In a stronger action such as the Model 92 Winchester it can be safely loaded to exceed the performance of the .44 Remington Magnum. This is true of many other calibers as well.

It is a fact that different firearms, even though they may be identical in model and caliber, shoot most accurately with one or two specific loads which varies from one weapon to another. There are a great number of variables which influence the most accurate load. Some of these variables are known and a few more are not, but most are due to manufacturing tolerances in both arms and ammunition. The exact bore diameter, chamber size, and the tolerances in the fitting of one part of the firearm to the next will differ slightly from one gun to the next without affecting the operating characteristics or safety of the firearm. It will greatly influence the accuracy of any given load. As it is not practical for the manufacturers to tailor ammunition for each firearm, we can only hope to exploit the maximum accuracy potential of our firearms if we tailor make our own ammunition.

SAFE STORAGE

Another question often asked about handloading concerns the safety factors of having gunpowder and primers around the house. If handled and stored properly, smokeless powder is less dangerous than gasoline or any of the drycleaning agents or other volatile solvents usually found in the average home. It produces no dust or fumes which may be easily ignited. It is not sensitive to shock or static electricity. It is not likely to detonate unless subjected to pressures of approximately 200,000 p.s.i. What this means is that it would be nearly impossible for the average person to cause an explosion with smokeless powder even if he wanted to. Smokeless powder is officially classified as a **propellant** powder, not as an explosive. It is, however, a moderately flammable substance and burns rapidly with a very hot flame when ignited. It should be stored in a cool, dry place, away from open flames or other sources of heat and out of the reach of children. Primers are much more sensitive to heat and shock than smokeless powder but are not likely to be hazardous if handled with reasonable caution and stored properly **in their original containers.** The storage conditions are the same as for smokeless powder.

EASY TO LEARN

Those who have not had experience in handloading are usually concerned that it may be too difficult to learn. Anyone with a bit of common sense and the ability to read and perform simple arithmetic can learn to handload safely. Under the supervision of an adult, many teenage and younger children also load their own cartridges. The loading manuals have clear and easy to understand procedures and safety rules preceeding the loading data.

HOW TO RELOAD

The basic steps of reloading a cartridge are very simple. When a cartridge is fired, the primer is set off by the action of the firing pin. It produces a flame which ignites the powder, creating a large volume of hot gases. The gases expand the cartridge case to seal the chamber and push the bullet out of the muzzle. From this we can see that the job of the cartridge case is to hold the primer so that it may be struck by the firing pin — to hold the bullet until the powder is ignited — to hold the powder until the cartridge is fired, and to seal the breech of the gun to prevent escape of the propelling gases.

The basic reloading procedure involves three steps. Step one is to inspect the fired case to make sure there are no defects that would make it unsuited for further use. Step two is to remove the spent primer and return the case to its original dimensions so that it will fit the chamber properly and hold the bullet securely in place. Step three is to replace the primer, powder, and bullet. The more detailed loading instructions in the loading manual simply relate these basic steps to the use of the tools required to perform each step.

If you are seriously considering starting to load your own ammunition, the first thing to do is to buy a loading manual and read it through carefully before purchasing equipment. The instructions and safety rules should be read and re-read until you understand completely every step and can recite from memory and understand all of the safety rules. Nearly every manufacturer of loading equipment and components publishes at least one loading manual. Excellent manuals are available from Lyman, Pacific, Hornady, Speer, Sierra, and several others and may be purchased in most gun shops or ordered direct from the manufacturer. The prices of the loading manuals will generally be from six to ten dollars.

Do not be in too much of a hurry to go out and buy your equipment yet. Get the manual and study it carefully. In our next several articles we will consider the choice of equipment and the cost of getting set up for handloading. We will try to help you get the most for your dollar based on the experience of veteran handloaders. We will also show you how to set up your loading bench and equipment and how to pick a suitable load from the thousands of published loads for each caliber.

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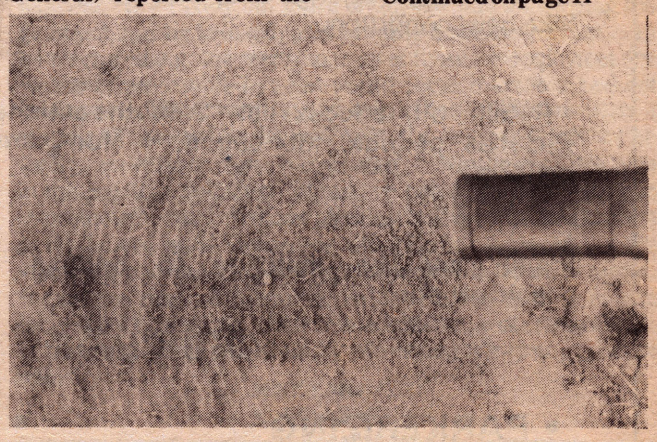
Continued from page 12

went on in the United States to force the government to adopt the gun. Lt. Juliann Hatcher (Later Major-General) reported from the Mexican border that the Lewis proved inferior to the Benet-Mercie, Maxim, and Colt potato-digger guns in

Continued on page 11



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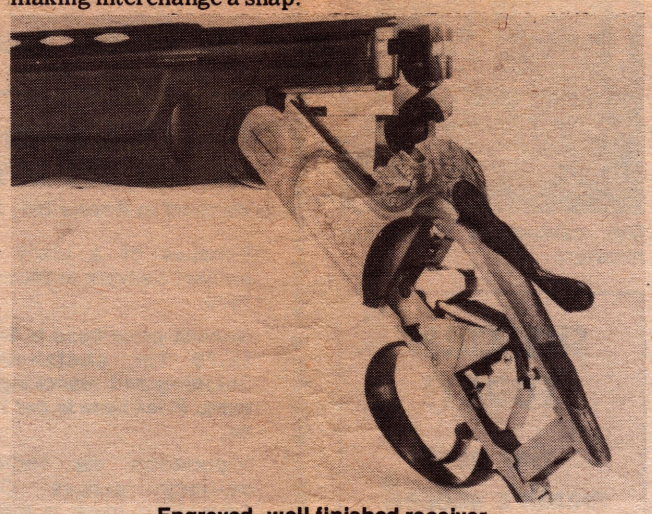
If spending a lot of money for one of the finest shotguns available can turn you into a better shooter, then this is one of them.

The Gamba MT 76 (for Montreal 1976) 12 gauge over/under combination trap and skeet gun is a tribute to the gunmakers art and shows that pride is still taken in the fitting of wood and metal to produce a superlative gun. Starting with a solid chunk of ordnance steel, the receiver is milled using many small operations to produce a one piece, strengthened at the points of stress, receiver. Locking in the break action Gamba is accomplished by the use of a double underlug locking device made with a wedge shaped receptacle in the action bar flats. The barrel locking lugs are recessed into the breech face. The metal-to-metal tolerances are as close as one could find in any high quality shotgun. It is difficult to slip a piece of paper in between any joints in the metal work. The lower tang is surface milled so that the optional interchangeable trigger housings can be substituted, then finely polished and jewelled. Even the butt stocks can be easily interchanged because of the uniformity of the tang. This, to adapt the gun perfectly to the shooter. The exterior of the receiver is ever-so-lightly scroll engraved, then highly polished. Very tasteful, but not ostentatious.

The hammer forged barrels are lapped to a glass smooth concentricity within. A special skeet choke was designed, tested and incorporated the MT76 for a significant improvement in shot stringing which leads to more effective patterns. The 27 inch Skeet barrel can be quickly changed over to the 28'' hunting barrel. Both have an 11mm wide vent rib that has an elongated white, ivory coloured, sighting bead encased in a metal sleeve just forward of the muzzle.

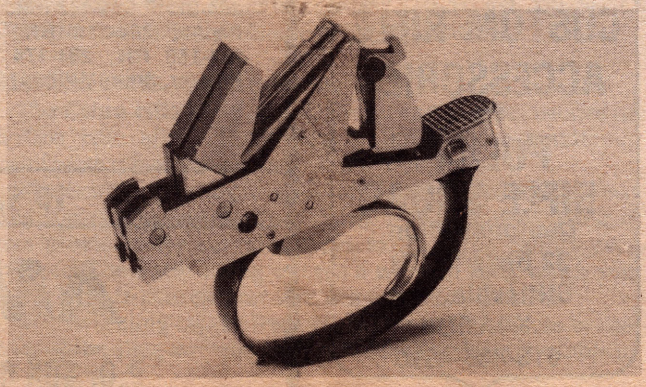
For your $1,500, you can also get the choice of leaf or coil style hammer springs. The controversy can be settled personally by your own choice. Leaf springs mean a faster lock time while coil springs last longer.

There is a non-automatic, sliding tang safety on the Gamba while the firing pins are spring mounted to retract after firing and are interchangeable. The entire trigger housing comes out of the lower tang with one easy motion making interchange a snap.

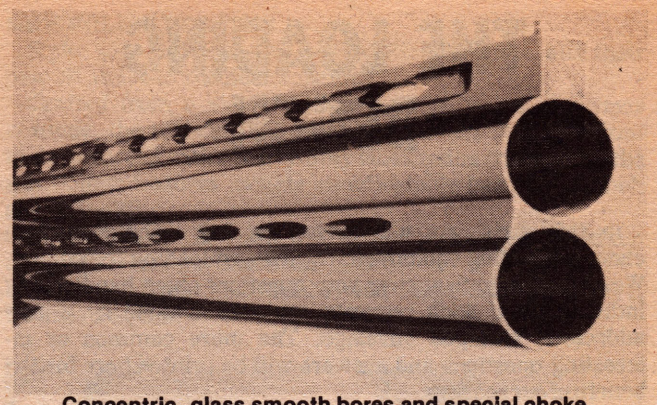


Engraved, well finished receiver.

While we are on the subject of trigger groups, the Gamba comes with a choice of three seperate interchangeable trigger groups. The single, selective or double triggers come with their own base plate and guard. The Gamba 'Anatomical' trigger is one of the nicest ideas that we have come across in a long time. When you bring the gun to your shoulder, the rearwardly placed, gradually tapering trigger finds your finger itself, or so it seems. There is no looking for it since the trigger finger of either left or right handed shooters slips into it naturally, much like slipping into your favourite bedroom slippers. The placement back in the guard ensures that the middle finger does not run the risk of being bruised. Maybe a small detail, but it adds up in competition or recreational shooting.



Detachable trigger group, coil spring hammer



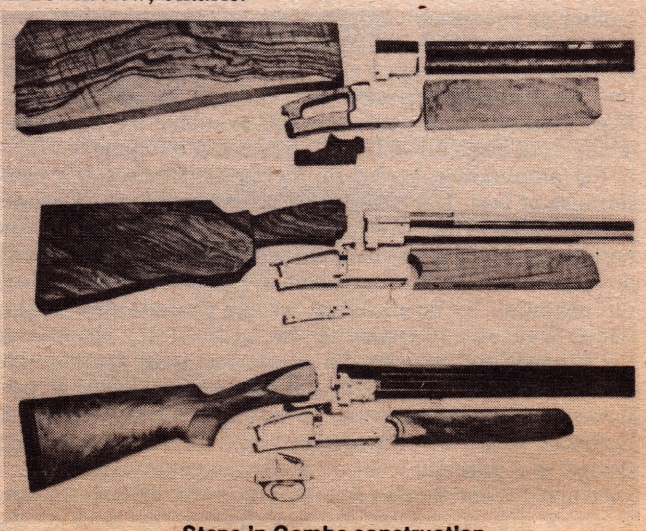
Concentric, glass smooth bores and special choke.

The single trigger is of the inertia type, the second shot being set by the recoil of the first. The Skeet model with the interchangeable barrel has a selector on the trigger to fire either the upper or lower barrel first. The trigger pull worked out to around five pounds for both barrels.

The wood finish was very appealing to us. It is a dense grained, European walnut with a semi-lustre oil finish. It is made for no-nonsense shooters where the risk of scratches from much use abounds. The fore end is a modified-beavertail, beautifully hand checkered with matching grain used whenever possible. The blanks for both butt and fore end are cut from the same piece.

Weight of the gun tips the scales at 7.5 pounds with the 27 inch barrel. This may be a little heavy but it minimizes the severity of recoil but does not affect the balance or response. Helpful when spending a day at the range.

Further information and enquiries may be made to the Canadian Distributor: Giovanni's Gun Shop, 682 Wilson Ave. in Downsview, Ontario.



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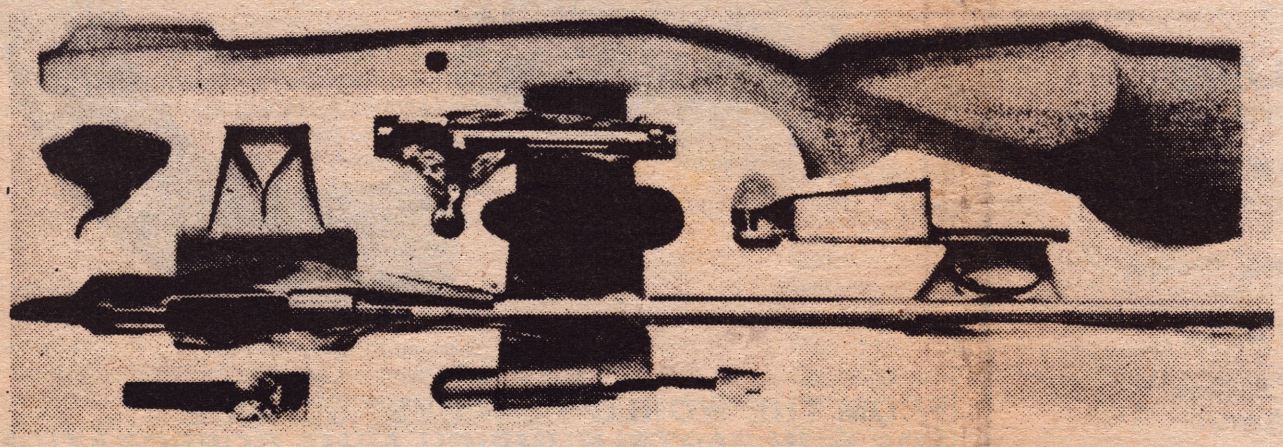

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J.M.P.S.A Sept. 1975

A Letter To Our Readers

From G. N. Dentay
Editor/Publisher

The first quarter of publication has passed and, as quickly, gone. We are now working towards Volume One Number Five. Let's sit back for a moment and appraise ourselves.

It takes time to get to know the commercial manufacturers and to get them to know you. Production headaches slow us down occasionally. We are growing slowly but surely, as these problems are solved one by one. You may have noticed that we are carrying more and more advertising each month. Not only do our advertisers have the pick of the market to offer you but they also share the same concerns as we do. Without our readers, first, then our advertisers, we would be foundering in the mire of the Canadian publishing field. So far we have held on and will be going to 16 pages next month.

Reader response has been good, not only with letters and phone calls, but subscriptions quite often for three years. Our readers are, to us, the most important aspect of this publication. We listen to what you want. If you like us . . . you'll read us!! Don't get the idea that we are swamped with suggestions or even criticisms. We want, and need more. What do YOU want to see? By listening to you we can remain full of fresh ideas and present a magazine that will entertain you as well as keep you informed.

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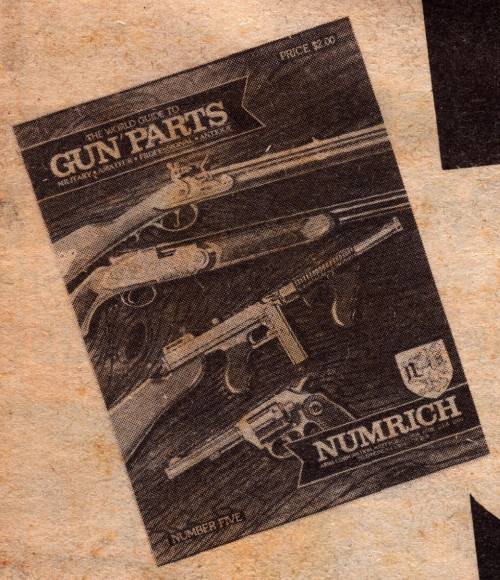

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Contrary to the statements made by certain irresponsible parties, the sale, or purchase, of restricted arms must be accompanied by C-301 Police Permit before shipping or receiving.

LEWIS

Continued from page 7

use against Pancho Villa and the Mexicans. In 1916 tests the 30-06 Lewis gun broke 35 parts, bent 15 others and jammed 206 times during the 20,000 round test. The trouble was traced to the powerful 30-06 cartridge. Alterations to the gas-system slowed the action and allowed the gun to perform satisfactorily. Other corrections made the magazine feed more reliable for 30-06 and by the wars end the U.S. had acquired over 3500 .303 and 30-06 guns.

The Lewis gun has the distinction of being the first aircraft machine gun. In 1914 two British air-men mounted a Lewis on their observation plane and made an unsuccessful attack. Later incendiary bullets fired from Lewis guns spelled the end to Germany's zeppelin attack on Britain.

An aircraft version, lacking the radiator, barrel jacket, and butt stock of the ground version, was made and used successfully in many fighters and bombers.

The drum feed was especially handy in the air. In W.W.11 hundreds of Lewis guns saw service in the British Home Guard and the Merchant Marine.

OPERATION

Once the mag is loaded, cock the gun and place the drum on the spindle sticking out the top. Rotate it clockwise exerting pressure down until it falls and clicks into place. The small plates lying below the cocking handle slots on both sides of the gun serve triple functions as dust guards, cocking handle holders and safeties. Be sure that the one on the cocking handle side is pressed down. Leave the other up to keep dirt and dust out of the action. The gun will fire when the trigger is pressed.

When the gun is fired gas is tapped from the barrel and directed toward the piston. The piston extends back through the gun ending in a vertical extension which fits into the bolt body in a slot. This slot runs along the length of the bolt body, but rotates around it as well. Thus, when the piston moves back it forces the bolt to rotate, unlocking the four lugs at the front of the bolt from their places in the receiver. Dual extractors pull the empty case from the chamber, ready for ejection. The return spring is a clock-work type, housed in the pregnant bulge forward of the trigger guard. Its gear-like outer case meshes with teeth on the piston. By adjusting the pre-set pressure on the spring a gunner can alter the fire-rate of his weapon. A cam lug on the bolt operates the drum feed pawl rotating a fresh cartridge into the feedway. The gun fires from an open bolt.

Since the firing pin is attached direct to the rear extension on the piston, it cannot protrude from the bolt face until the bolt is fully rotated into its locked position. This simple piece of engineering ensures that the gun will always be locked at the instant of firing.

The cooling system is unique to the Lewis, although similar systems have been used on the Marlin-Colt tank machine gun and others. On the Lewis aluminum cooling fins run lengthwise along the barrel. A jacket encases these fins from the rear of the barrel to beyond the muzzle. Both ends are open. When a bullet leaves the muzzle the blast of gas sucks air out of the space between the barrel and the jacket creating a draft rushing along the cooling fins.

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History Test

The Lewis Gun

BY TERRY EDWARDS

The rolling thump of the Lewis gun, shattering the black night at Passchendaele or drown in the drumfire of the Somme, is silent. The ears that 60 years ago drew comfort or terror from the sound are dead. In another decade the faint outline of the trenches will disappear and the last piece of rusted barbed wire will fall to the ground, leaving the only traces of war to the history books. Or so it would have been if for an afternoon in August. That was the day our staff, thankfully generations removed from the muddy trenches, decided to raise a few ghosts and a lot of dust at Ontario's Camp Borden.

Dust and lead. Base security chief tests Lewis.

Actually, consigning the Lewis to the grave even today might be premature. It served as the standard light machine gun of the British and Commonwealth forces in World War 1, was adopted by the American Army, used by the French, and saw service with the armies of Holland., Japan, Belgium, Russia, Portugal, Italy, Honduras, Norway and Nicaragua. Recently the Viet Minh turned the Lewis against the French and Americans in Vietnam. And, if the gun itself is obsolete, at least its basic action lives on in the American M-60 LMG.

The Lewis, in its most common version, the Mk 1, is a gas-operated, air-cooled, fully-automatic gun weighing 27-lbs. and being 50.5-inches in overall length. It is fed .303 cartridges from top-mounted rotating drums of 47 or 97 round capacity.

In our packing for the range we managed to forget the magazine loader. This meant the mag had to be loaded by hand, an arduous process. Not that it stopped us.

FIRING THE LEWIS

Firing the Lewis is an alien experience after one becomes used to "normal" rifles and machine guns.

The first impression of the gun is: Its loud. Very loud. We suspect the design of the cooling fins and barrel jacket creates a resonator effect, amplifying the noise of the normally docile .303. The recoil is mild, due to the heavy weight, gas-operation and medium-powered cartridge of the gun.

The cooling system relies on the muzzle blast to pull cool air along the longitudinal cooling fins inside the barrel jacket. The cooling system seems sound enough in theory and we're sure it works, but it has the disadvantage of stirring up a great cloud of dust in front of the gunner. This tends to obscure the target, and in combat could disclose the guns' position to the enemy.

Also readily noticeable is the sedate fire rate of the gun, about 500-rpm from the gun we fired. The rate is adjustable by pre-setting tension on the return spring.

Fired from the bipod, the gun is easily controlled so long as bursts are limited to five rounds or less. Laying three-round bursts on a succession of silhouette targets at 100-yards is quick andeasy.

Firing from the shoulder, standing, is impossible for most people, but firing from the hip is remarkably easy and accurate. For those that scoff at the idea of firing such a gun in the "John Wayne" manner, remember that "walking fire" was deemed of great importance by the tactical planners of late WW1. It was the ease with which the Lewis could be carried forward, firing, that sold the French army on the gun. Care must be taken to keep the rotating magazine free from interference and the weight and recoil of the gun result in a somewhat unusual stance.

John Wayne . . . lookout!

Lewis functions smoothly.

Hot casings pour forth from the right side of the action; southpaws beware. Even when the Lewis is held at hip level the muzzle blast raises a cloud of dust and leaves a rippled pattern on the ground before it.

Despite reports to the contrary, the Lewis had an admirable reputation for reliability in past and gave no reason for us to doubt it.

Aside from the forgotten loading tool the only problem we had was with the cocking handle. Very handily, this piece is designed to fit into either side of the gun. We managed to fit it in incorrectly and it flew off at the first burst. If this trick were done in combat the gun could still be cocked with a bayonet tip. Yes, we did find the cocking handle.

HISTORY

Like so many inventions the Lewis found poor acceptance at home and great scandal and misery for its developer, U.S. Army Colonel I. N. Lewis, of the Coast Artillery. The basic operating mechanism was developed for a semi-auto rifle by Samuel McClean and Lissak. The rifle was commercially unsuccessful, so in 1910 the patent holders, the Automatic Arms Company of Buffalo, N.Y. approached Lewis, Lewis, still in the military at the time was designer of many ordnance devices. The indirect artillery fire target plotter was one such invention. He agreed to develop a machine gun using the McClean-Lissak system. Lewis contributed the cooling system, return spring mechanism and several other features.

When the U.S. armed forces and arms industry did not flock to the Lewis gun, Lewis took the invention overseas to Liege, Belgium. There, Armes Automatique was formed, and began manufacture of the Lewis gun. Since the Belgian and British arms industries worked (and still work) closely together Britain was quick to see the virtues of the Lewis gun. Production shifted to the Birmingham Small Arms Co. in England. B.S.A. finally fell victim to Britain's economic woes last summer, and after two years of political and corporate manoeuvring, shut its gates.

With the help of a new producer, Savage Arms Corp. of Utica, N.Y. over 40,000 Lewis guns were built by 1916. Most were the Mark 1 ground version, known as the Model 1915 in the U.S.

While the Lewis did its part on the western front, a high-pressure campaign

Continued on page 7

NEXT MONTH

- MORE NEWS!
- MILITARY TEST REPORT
  'Schmeisser MP-40'
- WINCHESTER—.22 SEMI-AUTO TEST
- WORLD MILITARY REPORT
- TARGET HANDGUN TIPS
  Feature Report by M. Hodgson
- HK 91 TEST
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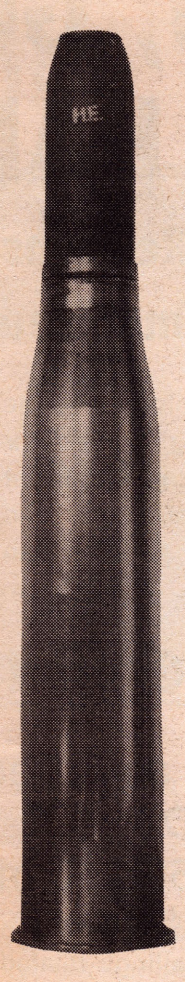

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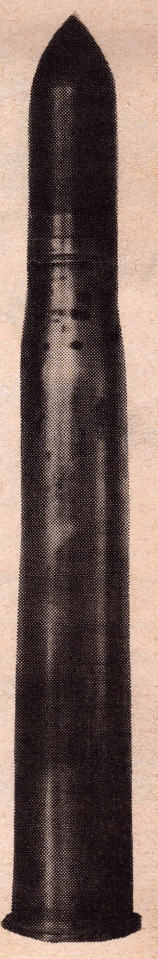

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